



DPCC Myth/Fact: Sequestration and National Security

Myth: Voting for the NDAA but against defense appropriations means you don't support our troops and their families.

Fact: Democrats are calling for a budget and an appropriations process that strongly supports our troops, which is why we voted against a budgetary gimmick in the Defense appropriations bill that Defense Secretary Carter has said doesn't work for our Defense Department and which would hurt military families and veterans.

- **Democrats are fighting to provide soldiers and their families with certainty by negotiating a budget deal now so we can vote to pass sustainable defense increases at the end of the year.** Republicans are moving forward with a defense appropriations bill that's inflated with budget gimmicks to make it seem like they are restoring defense spending. But, they are really just relying on tricks that would actually short-change our troops.
- **Our troops deserve better than a gimmick that national security leaders across the military services have denounced.**
 - **Secretary of Defense Ash Carter:** "The one-year OCO approach does nothing to reduce the deficit...Most importantly, because it doesn't provide a stable, multi-year budget horizon, this one-year approach is managerially unsound, and also unfairly dispiriting to our force. [Senate Committee on Appropriations, [5/6/15](#)]"
 - **Air Force Vice Chief of Staff Gen. Larry O. Spencer:** "If we're going to buy a really big weapon system, pay for F-35s or do a multi-year of C-130s, that's really difficult to do if you're trying to do that a year at a time." [U.S. Air Force, [3/27/15](#)]"
 - **Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Martin Dempsey:** "My advice is that we need to fix our base budget, because you build the institution through the base budget, and you respond to contingencies with the fund called [Overseas] Contingency Operations. [White House, [3/18/15](#)]"
- **Even Senator McCain, Chairman of the Armed Services Committee, has said that the appropriations process is the right place to work for a bipartisan budget agreement to replace automatic cuts.**

- “That fight should not take place on an authorization bill. I urge all of my colleagues, if we want to have this fight, have it on the appropriations bill, the money bill. This is authorization.” [Floor Remarks, [6/4/15](#)]

Myth: Blocking the defense appropriations bill while pushing for relief from automatic cuts to other agencies is reckless in a world with threats such as ISIL and Al-Qaeda.

Fact: Automatic cuts to critical investments that keep us strong at home also pose a great threat to our national security and the fight against ISIL. Agencies like DHS, Justice, the FBI, and State all play a critical role in the fight against ISIL and protecting us from terrorists and a healthy economy and education system are vital to a strong defense industrial base.

- **Democrats have a plan to fully fund our troops, as well as the other important national security agencies that are in the lead in seven out of nine major initiatives that are part of our strategy against ISIL.** This plan to support our troops, our border security, our cyber security and our airport security was voted down by Republicans **six** times:
 - Senate Budget Committee markup, [3/19/15](#);
 - Senate budget resolution vote, [3/27/15](#);
 - Senator Reed’s floor amendment to NDAA, [6/9/15](#) ;
 - Senator Mikulski’s Appropriations Committee alternative 302(b) allocations for spending, [5/21](#);
 - Senator Durbin’s Appropriations Committee amendment for defense markup, [6/11/15](#)
- **Failure to confront automatic cuts undermines the vast majority of our major initiatives against ISIL** Funding levels under automatic cuts would put our national security at unnecessary risk, not only through pressures on defense spending, but also through pressures on State, USAID, Homeland Security, and other important efforts outside of the Pentagon that help keep us safe. These agencies and efforts are an essential part of our counter-ISIL strategy. As General Dempsey noted this year, only two of the nine major ongoing initiatives against ISIL are military efforts, while the rest are nonmilitary. More broadly, the strength of our economy and the security of our nation are linked. [OMB, [6/16/15](#)]
- **Cuts to Homeland Security:** The Republican budget would cut funding for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) bill by 3 percent, adversely impacting DHS efforts to secure our borders and enforce the nation's immigration laws, damaging initiatives to enhance our cybersecurity posture and make cyberspace more secure, and undermining programs to counter violent extremism and protect the American people from terrorist threats. [OMB, [6/16/15](#)]
- **Cuts to counterterrorism and weapons of mass destruction control programs:** Republican budget cuts will harm critical programs that improve our partners' ability to counter terrorism, control the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and build civilian and military capacity. [OMB, [6/16/15](#)]

- **Cuts to education and research & development, critical to a healthy defense industrial base:** Automatic cuts also underinvest in education, research and development, and infrastructure; as described above, these cuts damage our national security by damaging our economic security. [OMB, [6/16/15](#)]

Myth: Voting against the motion to proceed on Defense Appropriations means delaying pay for our troops.

Fact: Under the bipartisan Ryan-Murray Budget agreement, the current budget fully funds the troops and their families through September 30, 2015. There is ample time and opportunity to negotiate a budget compromise and fully fund the government in a manner that responsibly pays our troops and their families.

- Earlier today, the Senate Democratic leadership wrote to Senate Republican leadership urging the Republicans to agree to begin negotiations next week. [Letter to Senate Republican Leaders, [6/18/15](#)]

Myth: Democrats are blocking funding for our troops so they can spend more money on the IRS and the EPA.

Fact: Military families need relief from automatic cuts to investments in education, medical care, and job training programs. We cannot break our promise to military families.

- **The Senate Republican MilConVA Appropriations bill cuts Veterans Medical Care by nearly \$500 million – an amount that could provide care for tens of thousands of veterans.** The Senate MilCon-VA appropriations bill reduces funding by about \$1.2 billion, or 2 percent, below the President's budget. This would lead to underfunding the President's request for Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical care by nearly half a billion dollars, equivalent to the cost of providing care for tens of thousands of veterans. [OMB, [6/2/15](#)]
- **The Republican Budget cuts to job training mean tens of thousands of service members will find it harder to gain employment after their service.** American Job Centers serve 1.2 million veterans annually, including 300,000 who receive intensive employment services. [OMB Letter to Senate Appropriators, [6/2/15](#)]
- **Thousands of military children could lose access to school readiness programs.** In 2013-2014, nearly one million low-income families benefited from the Head Start program, including 7,552 families that had a parent or guardian who was a member of the U.S. military on active duty. Under the Republican Budget, the Administration estimates that 35,000 children nationwide would lose access to Head Start. [White House, [3/15](#); CRS, 6/15]